4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52

080

# NOTES ON THE

# Tribes, Provinces, Emirates and States

OF THE

# Northern Provinces of Nigeria

Compiled from Official Reports

BY

O. TEMPLE

EDITED BY

C. L. TEMPLE

(SECOND EDITION)

[title page]

Published by
THE C.M.S. BOOKSHOP,
LAGOS,
NIGERIA.

ENGLISH AGENTS:
JAMES TOWNSEND & SONS,
LITTLE QUEEN STREET, EXETER.
34, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON.

1922.

## NUPE.

AUTHORITIES:

Mr. T. A. G. Budgen. Mr. E. C. Duff.
Mr. E. G. M. Dupigny.

131 The Nupe people are distributed over the southern part
771 of the Protectorate in clans that have little connection with each other. Probably nearly half are pagans practising different forms of religion, the remainder are Muhammadans. The Niger Province is the headquarters of the tribe, who are to be found in their greatest numbers in the vicinity of the Niger and Kaduna Rivers. They claim to be indigenous, but some authorities
173 trace a connection between them and the Gabi, erstwhile inhabitants of Egypt. There is a legend to the effect that a certain stranger, a hunter, called Abduazizi, travelling from the east, arrived with his family at the town of Doko Daji, where he settled amongst the Bini. He was given the title of Nefiu, the Arabic word for fugitive, whence arises the corruption Nufe, Nupe. It is also asserted that Nupe is not so much the name
[30] of a tribe as of a language, and that it may well be that the new
177 comers adopted the speech of the older inhabitants, the Gwari or Gbari, between which and Nupe there are now only

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

FF52 Nupe FF52



197 dialectical differences. Many words are identical; they have a similar custom of splitting the verb, and the main difference is that where the Gbari form the negative by the terminal letter R, the Nupe form it by M. It was at Nupiko where the Kaduna 173 flows into the Niger, that Edegi first consolidated the clans 167 under one Chief and founded the Nupe Kingdom (*vide* 131 History of the Niger Province). It was from that region Rabba, that those Nupe came who now inhabit the upper reaches of the Niger in Kontagora and Borgu to Yelwa and beyond into Sokoto Province, where their tribal marks consist of two deep scars on either side of the nose. From this northerly point they follow the river down through Ilorin Province and Kabba, though her Egga is the only place where they are of [144 pure race, as elsewhere they have intermarried freely with neigh- 152] bouring tribes. These Egga Nupe migrated there from Bida. There are also settlements of Nupe right up the Benue as far as the Ribado Division of Yola, for they are a great trading people and take advantage of the markets on the waterways. [161] There are 1,047 in Nassarawa Emirate; elsewhere they have not been censussed.

64 The distinctive tribal mark is a curved line from the bridge 304 of the nose to the corner of the mouth, on the right-hand side of the face.

161 The Nupe population of Agaie number 24,335, and of Lapai 5,061.

The size of the clan may very roughly be assessed at over 100,000 in the Niger Province.

643 The Emir was chosen from one of the three royal families, Osuman Zaki, Masaba, and Umaru Majigi, all descendants of the Filane founder of the dynasty Mallam Danyo, each of the three families in succession having the right to rule the clan. The Elders would meet together and discuss who was likely to make the best Chief, and having chosen would consult the Mallamai as to the propriety of their selection. As some amongst the Mallamai claimed the gift of foreknowledge, their advice was almost invariably followed. Delay was avoided as far as possible, because in the interval between the death [67a of the Nupe King and the appointment of his successor (which might not be till after the burial), no law could be enforced. If any crime were committed during that period the perpetrator was safe from subsequent punishment, and any prisoner who escaped might not be recaptured.

Thus on the occasion of the death of Muhammadu in 1916, which occurred at nine in the evening, his wife performed the last rites before his death was known outside the compound, and he was buried at 3 a.m. in his house, the public not being acquainted of the fact till later in the day.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52



The successor's initiatory act is to go to the tombs of each of his predecessors, where he offers prayer at the head of his people. He would have three compounds to visit, the burial place of each of the three family branches, one sepulchre being in his own palace, as the Chief resides in his own family mansion. 643

The Nupe King, entitled Etsu in pre-Filane days, now Emir of Bida, has been a Muhammadan for some centuries and Koranic law is, therefore, observed, but as it has been modified since the advent of the British the following relates to the system of punishment in vogue before that time. All cases were then, as now, decided by the Alkali in court, and he informed the Emir of all important sentences. If there were doubt as to the guilt of the accused the Alkali would sometimes summon a Mallam with the gift of second sight to assist him, but he would never fail to come to a decision. Boys under seventeen were not considered adult, and were not subject to courts of law, but were punished at home by their fathers or guardians—and the same applied to unmarried women. 671 696 [584] [671]

The theft of any food stuff eaten on the spot was considered no offence, but if any objects worth 1,250 cowries (=6d.) or more were stolen the thief had his hand cut off, for a second offence his foot, for a third offence his second hand, for a fourth, his second foot. It is so much recognised as a brand, that an innocent man who has to have his hand amputated always has it done at the elbow. If, however, there were extenuating circumstances, if it was a first offence, and the man pleaded guilty, he might be let off altogether, or imprisoned. Theft between husband and wife is considered no offence. If the value of goods taken was 10,000 cowries or more his head was cut off, and the same punishment was inflicted for highway robbery with violence. If no bodily hurt were done, imprisonment was substituted for any term up to four years. 685 [635] 683

For assault a fine of 50,000 cowries was levied.

For resisting a dogarai, or officer of the Alkali's court, a fine of 100,000 cowries upwards was imposed.

Injudicious talk was punished by cutting off the mouth and ears.

Murder was punished by decapitation. 682

Sentences of death were carried out by dogarai, who buried the bodies, unless the families sent for them. 696 [666]

Adultery was heavily punished in old days, but not now. Married women were liable to law. They suffered imprisonment inside the Alkali's compound, in compliance with Muhammadan decorum, and a murderess was put in a pit (in this compound), from which her head alone emerged, and was kept there without food or water till she died, for a woman might not be killed! There were but few women criminals, as crime is ground for divorce, and it is hard for a criminal to get another husband. 684 [642] 586

586 A woman may equally divorce her husband for crime, or she may get special permission from the Court to marry someone else, if he consents, for the period for which her husband is imprisoned. She cannot obtain divorce on any other ground except that of desertion for three years, or failure to keep her. A man can obtain it for other causes, but rarely does so without good cause, for he loses all the dower money he has paid for his wife. Remarriage is permitted to both sexes after a three months' interval.

581 764 Marriage plays an important part in the social life of the Nupe and is *de rigueur* for both sexes. Until a man has married a virgin with due ceremony, he is accounted a nobody and his fellows will neither speak with him nor listen to him. No one will bury an unmarried woman, even though she be a widow. After much delay this degrading duty devolved upon the dogarai, and now upon Government labourers.

584 The would-be bridegroom calls three times upon the girl's parents, each time bringing with him some small present for the father, mother and girl, and then makes known his intentions. The girl's consent has to be obtained, and the parents generally tell him to go and ask her, without mentioning that he has been first to them. If she agrees she tells him to go to her people and thus it is arranged. Indeed it is sometimes she who first suggests to her father whom she would like to marry and he takes the necessary steps. The engagement is formally recognised when the suitor gives 12s. 6d. in money and two calabashes of kola nuts to the father, and 7s. 6d. in money and one calabash of 583 kola nuts to the mother, for them to distribute amongst the 584 male and female members of their family respectively. From this time on the pretendant must work on his father-in-law's farm or house, together with his friends, two or three times a year, and every big Salla he gives to his bride 5s. worth of clothes and 2s. to plait her hair. This may last for some years, as a boy may be betrothed at the age of ten or twelve and a girl at five or seven. These early engagements are, however, considered undesirable, and the yearly cost to the groom effectually tends to discourage them. A careful count is kept of all that he gives, so that it may be returned if the girl should ultimately refuse to consummate the marriage. Once they are engaged the boy [573] and girl may not play together, which up to the time of marriage they may do with anyone else. In fact a boy and girl may declare themselves "saranchi," or great friends, and they are allowed to go to each other's houses until one or other of them marries.

585 When the time for consummating a marriage has come the groom gives his wife three cloths and a handkerchief, at a minimum value of 30s., and if she does not like those he has selected, she returns them and he must send others till she is satisfied. At the same time he gives her parents £2 10s., which they spend on

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52



an outfit for their daughter, pots and pans, mats, etc. A rich man gives something under £4, and spends perhaps as much as £9 or £10 on cloths. If he is unable to raise all this money at once an arrangement can be made in the Alkali's Court, by which he is bound over to make up the deficit within a given time, and so long always as he gives his wife 1,250 cowries, value 6d., for her first chop money, they may marry at once. 585

The dowry is sometimes remitted in cases where the father-in-law can afford to support the young couple, or a man may marry his first cousin without payment. Where no dower is given the marriage is known as "salaka."

Girls do not marry as a rule before they are sixteen or seventeen and often not till they are twenty, men when they are eighteen or twenty, or later, according to their wealth. The customs of the aboriginal pagan Nupe* differ slightly. The betrothal being arranged by the heads of the respective families, and when it is agreed upon, the boy's guardian assembles the whole family and names the bride in their presence and in that of the prospective groom. All presents are given through the guardian, whom the suitor accompanies on his visits to the bride's people, but he does not see the bride herself. A week before the marriage is consummated both parties remain in their houses, the groom to receive the salutations of his friends, the bride to stain her hands and feet with henna, and to powder her face and body with camwood. On the wedding day the suitor's friends escort him to the hut of his betrothed, where they talk, but she sits silent until the groom gives her presents, which is a signal for the departure of his friends. When the groom emerges he proclaims whether or not he has found his bride chaste. A feast follows, and the groom is escorted back to his house by his friends, where he is followed later by his bride, who is attended by women carrying her outfit. The couple live together in one hut until she conceives, when her husband builds himself another house. 582 184 584 184 184 585

The wedding festivities for a virgin are carried on for a week, day and night. For the first three days they take place in her own people's house, and on the fourth day she goes to her husband's house, where the feasting continues for another four days and four nights. Seven days of seclusion follow, when neither man nor wife may be seen, and after this he is allowed the full honours of a husband. The bride, however, may not go out till three months have elapsed.

The ceremony is of a very much humbler description for a second marriage. 588

In the Gurara District of Nupe (Lapai Emirate), a curious custom exists, which, with minor modifications is practised 557 351 425

* Sapke and Mokwa. The differences only have been mentioned, not the similarities.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

FF52 Nupe FF52.



557 as far east as Awtun (Ekiti), and from Yagba District to Ilorin.
588 *"A wealthy woman trader would sometimes go through the
851 form of marriage with one or more young women—reputed virgins.
425 These 'wives' she would send out to various neighbouring villages, ostensibly trading. When, in the expected course of events, these 'wives' formed illicit attachments, a careful note was made of the resultant progeny. When the children had reached five or six years, or more, they were claimed by the woman 'husband' as her children, based on the legal fiction of all legal wives' children being the children of the legal 'father.' In almost every case, the real father compounded with the legal 'father,' in the customary value of the child. The profit to the woman capitalist was exceedingly great.

557 "This custom is not confined to the pagan, nor to the female
586 sex. Many a reputed Mussulman (Bida-Pategi) will allow his
851 wife to go on three and four years' trading expeditions, fully
425 cognisant of the inevitable results. In due time he will apply for the custody of the children, which are legally his until his wife has sued for and obtained a legal divorce, which last is seldom done, owing (in Nupe and Ilorin generally) to the high 'dowry' money claimed. If the case is settled out of Court, the husband enjoys substantial profits. On the other hand, if the wife and children return to him, which is seldom nowadays, he can always obtain a respectable 'dower' from the suitors to the girl children. As to the boys, he finds every use for them on his farm."

595 The first wife is the head one, and advises the other women on all household and commercial matters, and they have to apply to her for permission to leave the compound. Each wife has her own hut, but all the women have their meals together, when they sit round the pot in a circle, in strict order of precedence, counting from the right hand of the first wife. Next her is the second wife, next her the third wife, next her the fourth wife, then come their daughters and foster-daughters in order of age, dependants and slaves. The first wife helps herself and passes the pot round
554 the table, hands only being used—she alone may sit upright, while the others are obliged to crouch in her presence.

264 There are three meals in the day, at 7 a.m, mid-day, and sun-
262 down, each meal consisting of one dish only. For breakfast they have
[272] "fura," a sort of porridge, with cow's milk where it is obtainable, (The Nupe will not drink goat's milk, though they eat its flesh.) At noon the poorer people have porridge again, the well-to-do have guinea-corn, or rice, mixed with soup. Supper is the principal meal, when soup is made with guinea-corn or rice, and any meat or fish that may be available.

* Mr. E. C. Dufi.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52



The men eat together in a similar way, but apart from the women, and tiny boys may feed with either. Any snacks such as honey-cakes, or fruit, are eaten at odd times in the day, and water is always drunk after meals, not at them. Eggs were never eaten, but the practice of doing so is gradually creeping in.

In the ordinary routine of life people get up at 4 or 5 a.m., observe salla, and go about their respective avocations which, with a two hours' interval at mid-day, they pursue until 6 p.m. when they again make salla and have their evening meal. This ended, the children, boys and girls alike, go and dance in the market, from which they are retrieved by their elders, with some difficulty, about 9 p.m. and sent to bed. The men pay each other visits, and sit talking in groups of three or four till about 11 p.m., or on bright nights as long as the moon is up. Women do the same, but in their own compounds. They do not pay many visits, but go to see their mothers once every month and their sisters more rarely. Their husbands encourage friendship between their wives and the wives of their friends. If a man is at home when his wife receives a visitor he salutes her and goes out, and when he goes to visit his friend he goes in to salute the women of the house, and then either sits outside with his friend or goes to his hut. A man is expected to call on his parents-in-law every Friday, the Muhammadan holiday, but is never accompanied by his wife, unless it is to accuse her of some ill deed.

The incoming of the Muhammadan New Year is a time for great rejoicing. On New Year's Eve everyone eats as much as he or she can hold, and the poor can ask for a meal from anyone. Next day they make prayer, and everyone contributes in alms according to his means, with a minimum of a hundred cowries, which the Mallams distribute amongst the needy. A Mallam then foretells events of general interest for the coming year, when the rains will come, and whether they will be heavy or light, the success of the crops, whether there will be much sickness and in what months, whether there will be fertility amongst the stock, and amongst the people, and the best month for the purposes, etc. It is a day for visiting amongst the grown-ups, and calls are made on all persons of importance. On their return from prayer the children play a game. They may raid the houses of any uncle or aunt, grandparent, or one following the same trade as their father, and take anything they can lay hands on, unless and up to the time the person raided gives each child twenty cowries. The elders may not defend their own property, but the children of the household do, and battles are waged between the young people. This custom is dying out where there are white men.

Other games played by the children are hide-and-seek and king-of-the-castle, but they rarely have toys, and never balls.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

FF52 Nupe FF52



462 The Nupe women have many occupations besides the ordinary household duties. Her obligations as a wife are to prepare the food, and bring firewood and water. They spin, weave, cook little cakes for the market, or practise hair-dressing, a lucrative profession, for a reputed coiffeuse receives 6d. to 1s. a head, according to the elaboration of the dressing, though no client presents herself more than once every moon. There are also women doctors, who attend both male and female patients, and receive the same fees that a man doctor would do. The Nupe women are above all things traders, and will often travel great distances on this behest. On these occasions they are accompanied
462 by their husbands, but the first wife is left at home by right of
139 her position. Usually she prefers so to remain; if she rebels, her husband asks her not to come on account of the loss of dignity, but if she persists he yields. In the early days of her married life, before there are other wives and dependants, she may trade in the neighbourhood three months after her wedding, and when
[562] there are two wives the elder will often take it in turns to go out with the younger. At no time may she leave the compound, however, without her husband's permission.

462 The women do a good deal of out-door work. They collect
562 the produce of all trees, except palm-oil and kola trees, the former
139 of which were a reserve of the Emirs, but are now divided between the occupier and the Chief of the town, and the latter are kept by the men. These they may sell for their own benefit, after first deducting in every case what will be required by the household throughout the year. Women also cultivate and sell ground-nuts and all root-crops, such as ochro, which do not require transplanting. Men do all transplanting and, therefore, own such crops as cassava, sweet potatoes, onions, etc., but it is the women who have the right to sell them, and as they usually keep a commission of 25 per cent. it is a valuable right. If, however, a man finds he is being given unusually high prices he rewards his wife with a liberal gift of cloth. It is the man who tends and owns all grain and, therefore, sells it for himself, but he is thought ill of if he does not first consult his wives as to the price he is to accept for it. They sow the corn and help to garner it after it is reaped, and each woman has charge of so many bundles, as to the sale of which she must be consulted. She expects some small present for her trouble.

566 When a household becomes rich, that is to say when their
556 property, if sold, would realise £20 to £40, a number of people
736 of both sexes ask leave to become their dependants. The master of the house will take no children without the consent of their parents, but a poor man will frequently desire his protection for them. They are then treated as children of the house, they are given food and clothes, and when the time for marriage comes the master of the house provides the necessary money.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

FF52 Nupe FF52



They are then turned out of the house, but are allowed to live in the vicinity, and continue to receive food and protection in return for whatever work is required of them. There are dependants of both sexes, and the unambitious often prefer to spend their whole lives in this manner. Slaves were treated in much the same manner, and children born in captivity were accounted free.

Motherhood is the great desire of the women, and every New Year the Mallams proclaim which will be the best months in that year for child-bearing. They have a strong belief in a medicine-man called "Soba," who lives in the bush at Lemo, between Bida and Zungeru, and who gives medicines to produce fertility. He is seldom to be found in person, but there are guardians in the bush who act as intermediaries.

When a child is born it is nourished on water, in which the leaves of the Aduruku tree (or the bark and leaves of some seven to ten different kinds of trees, the mixture is termed "dauri") have been boiled for three to seven days. It is poured into their mouths. This continues if the mother's milk is not good, for infants are never given the milk of any animal. After seven days the child is named, and both boys and girls are called after their father and after his father, though their first name be different. They are seldom called after their mother. The aboriginal custom is somewhat different, a girl being named on the eighth, a boy on the ninth day after birth. All the relatives assemble after dawn, certain roots are placed in a pot and beer poured over them. Some is poured as a libation on the ground, the head of the family then drinks some himself, conjuring the good spirit of medicine to protect the child's life, which he designates by name. The guests then consume two pots of beer, and a feast is held with the usual dancing, drumming and singing.

Boys are circumcised by the barber at the age of six or seven, after which they commence working on the farms. When they approach the age of puberty they leave their parents' house, and build themselves a separate hut.*

The eldest child, whether boy or girl, is hated by its parents; they will not look at it, and a large percentage die of neglect. They never call it anything individual, only "boy" or "girl," and the mother would refuse to feed it but that her husband's parents come and live with her for three months to see that she fulfils that duty. Sometimes they take the baby away with them and give it to some wet-nurse, but in no case is the first-born left with its parents after it is weaned. The grandfather always takes it. It has been asserted that the mother will not suckle her first-born child because her milk is unwholesome.

* Saphs and Mokwa.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52



853 This is tested by an ant (chinaka) being placed therein, and
787 if it drowns the child is given to a wet-nurse and the mother is medically treated. This custom is particularly prevalent amongst riverain Nupe.

855 Subsequent children are thoroughly spoilt until they reach
593 the age of three or four years when, amongst the well-to-do, at all events, the mother is thought to be too fond to make a good guardian. Girls are usually weaned at the age of three years,
[843] boys not until they are four. The children may, therefore, be
955 sent right away to a boarding school for some ten years, or
874 the relations may take them to a day school, arranging their
593 marriages, and in fact divorcing them so entirely from their own parents that the only connection left is inheritance. If the grandfather is alive he distributes the children amongst their uncles and aunts on the male side, generally in order of seniority. They call them father and mother, and when grown-up would visit them and give them money before going to their true parents. The foster-parents would equally go to their foster children for support in their old age, and only to their own children in the last resort.

874 A successful Mallam will have a school containing fifty or sixty children, amongst whom he keeps up a rigid discipline by means of the rod, and if a child attempts to run away it is put into leg-irons. There are whole holidays on Thursdays and Fridays, but on working days the hours are 4 to 6 and 7 to 11 a.m., and 2 to 4 and 7 to 8 p.m. Day scholars miss the first two hours. The children learn the Koran, and reading and writing in Arabic characters, then their own language, and then Haussa; sewing, and at a later stage sums. Boys and girls work and play together, but when girls reach a marriageable age they are taught by the Mallam's wives. There are no regular holidays, and children remain for some ten years without a break. When they leave the school the Mallam
[875] receives a fee of 20,000 cowries, in addition to which there may or may not be complimentary presents given. The young scholar, on reaching home, goes to salute the Sarki and all elders, and receives a dash from each to celebrate the home-coming.

643 The same customs that apply to the commoner apply to the
874 Chiefs and Emirs. His children are also sent to school, and he
955 never keeps his first-born. In questions of marriage it is he
581 who takes the first step, and he will often give his daughters in marriage to the merest talaka, and may even marry a peasant girl himself without incurring reproach.

642 The Emir of Bida keeps up an elaborate state. He sends food to all visitors to his capital and provides them with accommodation. He summons Chiefs to audiences, and holds a levee in the palace courtyard every Friday morning between 7 and 8 a.m., where all or any of his subjects assemble to salute him but he does not enter into conversation with anyone then.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52



He may go out to war himself, but more often puts the operations under the War-Chief, Sarkin Yaki, who is himself advised by the Wari-Yaki, a man chosen by the Mallamai for this purpose, and often of so humble a position that the warriors do not know who he is. The Sarkin Yaki, however, obeys him invariably, and indeed it is the Mallamai who direct when and where an attack should be delivered or a retreat made. If the Sarkin Yaki should be killed in war, the army retires to await another appointment by the Emir. It was the custom for the two eldest daughters of the Sarkin Nupe to go to war, each arrayed in two thick rigas, a cummerbund, and carrying a sword and spear. They had large followings, for they gave a big proportion of the spoils to their retinue, but they followed the direction of the Sarkin Yaki. No woman was allowed to accompany them into battle, but many of the sex were discontented with the restriction, and, in consequence, the practice became unpopular amongst the Nupe men. The general feeling became so strong that on the death of the Chief, Umoru Majigi, in 1884, these ladies were no longer allowed to go out to war. Their names were Atiba and Wodiko, names invariably given to the Chief's two eldest daughters. In other respects they lived ordinarily, and were married, but their husbands would never fight in the same war with their wives. Each Chieftain brings his following, and there are bodies of horsemen and footmen, the former armed with spears, the latter with bows and arrows. A war-camp is formed some seven to ten miles from where hostilities are expected to take place, and here the stores and women are left. The Mallamai and a large number of civilian hangers-on advance to the verge of the fight, and wait till success is attained, when they dash in to secure a share of the spoil, the Mallamai giving the word when it is safe to do so. Needless to say their presence is often resented. Envoys may be sent from one army to another in perfect safety, protected by the waving of a white flag, or of green branches; they generally dress in white for additional surety.

Before any campaign is undertaken the Emir consults a Mallam gifted with the power of prophecy, and he says whether the results would be good or bad. A hundred years ago the advent of a fair race from the west was foretold by the prophets in a MS. still extant, and the resistance to their arms was forbidden. That was why the present Emir of Bida and his family, together with all the Mallamai, refused to come out against the British. There are some prophets who are above worldly interest and desire, and others who give advice for 1,000 cowries, or perhaps sixpence. It is a special art in which they receive instruction as youths, and there are books on the subject. The Mallams are consulted on such questions as marriage, trade ventures, and sickness. They look on the ground for about ten minutes and

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52



875 sometimes consult a book before speaking; if it concerns anyone
787 who is absent and unknown to the Mallam, the questioner lays his hand on the ground, at which the Mallam gazes.

In the case of illness the Is-sabi is consulted, as if death is certain it would be mere waste to spend money on doctors and on medicine, as is otherwise done.

759 Some doctors have acquired great reputations, and people travel long distances to consult them. As they are not paid unless they effect a cure, they will not undertake hopeless cases.

764 When a man dies he is buried in the compound in a rectangular-
766 shaped grave, which has three depths, one within the other. The body, which is wrapped in a large new cloth, is laid on a mat on one side in the deepest part, the centre, facing eastwards; wood is placed over it to prevent the earth touching the corpse.
[554] Some of the more important men have a special burial-room in their compound, but with this exception it is the same for men, women, and children. Those who die of small-pox or who commit suicide are, however, taken out and thrown into the bush by dogarai, for no one else will touch them. If a body is being carried home it may never be laid down, so a large number
[184] of bearers are provided to relieve one another. The pagan Nupe pour beer upon the grave, and offer prayers to the spirits.*

765 For seven days after a death the brothers, sons, daughters, and other near relations and friends, come and sit with the bereaved principal from six in the morning till six in the evening. Dirty white clothes constitute mourning apparel, and this is worn for children, parents and spouse.

765 A widower may go out after seven days and work a little,
768 but not much till forty days have elapsed, when he may resume his ordinary habits, though he continues to wear white for five months. Widows, however, remain shut up in the compound for five months, during which time they may not dress their hair, or remove their sandals, or see any man. This over they remarry, and can exercise their own choice as to a groom, being allowed forty days within which to make their arrangements. By the end of this time the law of the country insists on marriage, an old woman getting an old husband, for no one will bury an unmarried woman and, of course, she has no home where she has a right to lie. It is a terror to the widows during their enforced five months of singleness lest they may fall ill or die, for even sickness, following so hard on the tragedy of death, would be considered a sign of evil, and possibly witchdom, so the woman would find difficulty in securing another husband.

768 The heirs are responsible for all debts incurred by the deceased, whose property is divided between his eldest son, his other

* Sapke and Mokwa.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

FF52 Nupe FF52



sons, his whole brothers, and his daughters in a fixed and decreasing proportion. If the children are infants the money is held in trust for them by the brothers of the deceased. A woman's money is inherited in the same way, but either sex may leave their money as they choose, by declaring their wishes in the presence of a large number of responsible witnesses. If there is no family, a woman may inherit from her husband, and in some cases where there are no children, and she is known to have been a specially good wife, the brothers of the deceased forego their right in her favour. If she has no children her property goes to her husband. In no case does an illegitimate child inherit.

In old times the people did not dare live outside walled villages, but the neighbouring lands were apportioned by the village-head amongst the various heads of families, according to the amount he and his could beneficially occupy. The family-head in his turn granted the right of occupancy to individuals of his family, and, as no tree was of value before the virgin forest was cleared, each occupant had also the right to the sylvan produce of his land. As, however, virgin forest diminished and land became less plentiful, the heads reserved the use of the oil-palm to themselves, though at one time they held it in trust for the Emir.

Land cannot be sold, but it may be redistributed either on the migration of the holder, or on the extinction of the whole family. The village-head has a right to ask the family-head to give him back some land that he may grant it to a new comer, always supposing that this land is not at the time fully occupied. The right of occupancy passes on the death of the holder to the successive head of the family.

Amongst the pagan Nupe* the guardian spirit "Gunu" is worshipped. Sheep, dogs and fowls are sacrificed in his honour, their blood being poured out as a libation to him, whilst their flesh is consumed by the worshippers. Every eleven months the men go to his altar, beneath which sacred relics have been buried since time immemorial, where they kneel down in a wide circle, joining hands, and bowing their foreheads to the ground. The Elders address the spirit, and a feast and special dance follows. Other festivals are held at harvest time, and on the appointment of a new head-man, each village head-man being also village priest. There is a semi-religious institution called "Ndakogboiya." A meeting is held at the Chief's house, when a man may complain of his wife's conduct and beg that she may be taken to task, together with any other ill-doer. A man then mounts on stilts, and appears amongst the people after dark, proclaiming their evil deeds, and receiving propitiatory

* Sapke and Mokwa.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

FF52 Nupe FF52



offerings of goats and fowls. The "Ndakogboiya" is, however, losing its efficacy, and indeed Muhammadanism is rapidly replacing the ancient faith.

The influence of the Nupe is great, as may be seen from the following lists of septs who speak the Nupe language, or a dialect thereof, and are probably of Nupe origin. These dialects are intelligible to all Nupe. The first three mentioned were by far the largest and most important.

1. Pateji.
2. Kupa.
3. Baedeji.*
4. Kede.
5. Bangawa.†
6. Bata.
7. Batachi.
8. Bini.
9. Dibo.‡
10. Duchu.
11. Ebe.
12. Etsu.§
13. Kakanda.†
14. Kusopa.
15. Zumbufu.
16. Kutegi.§
17. Enegi.§
18. Gbachi.§
19. Ganagana.‡

The Nupe of Pateji are situated in Ilorin Province. They are the descendants of the original Nupe Sarakuna, who are now scattered all over the country and are called "Agabi," the name for their distinctive mark of one broad scar on each side of the nose (on the cheek). The custom of cicatrization has become optional.

The Nupe of Kupa inhabit the Agbaja District of Kabba Province; there are also a few in the Bunu District. Their distinctive mark is two lines on each side of the face, from the temple to the lip; within these are a series of small cuts. Their population number some 3,600. Their name is said to be a contraction of "Oku-pari" (=canoe-men of Oku), a river in Kontagora Province. Their weapons are flint locks and spears, arrows only being used in small numbers.

The Kede are a riverain section who have spread along the river banks in the Niger and Ilorin Provinces. The word "Kede" signifies "Dan Sarki," and is connected with a tradition that dates back to the sixteenth century, circ. 1505 A.D., when Edigi, who was travelling up the river, received assistance with his canoe from a man whom he found seated upon a stone fishing, gowned in two robes, one black, the other white. Edigi, when he had established himself as King, conferred upon this man the title of Kuta (which means the man who wears gowns of black and white). One of the Kuta's salutations is "takun"

* The Baedeji are of Yoruba extraction, though, having settled in Nupe territory at Jebba, they have adopted the Nupe language.

† Their Nupe origin is disputed.

‡ The Dibo, Ganagana and Kakanda are sometimes claimed as Nupe, but their languages are different, and it is unlikely that their connection is closer than that induced by neighbourhood.

§ Naturalised Nupe.

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

FF52 Nupe FF52



(a stone), in commemoration of the legend. Only a man who lives by the river and is a canoe-man can be a Kede. The men never marry outside the clan, though the women will sometimes do so. They keep very much to themselves, and no stranger was permitted to enter the town of Pojo, not even the Emir of Bida whose suzerainty they recognised.

They are pagans and pray to gods or departed spirits in the rivers. Many hundreds of men will enter the water together and gaze into it, for hours and even days together, while they make prayer. They say that a race of people inhabit the rivers, that they are very fine people, but small, and that they have power over all things in the water. The Kede are great swimmers, and can see things in the water that are hidden from other men. For instance, a girl at Egga, who was bathing in the early morning, in company with many others, was caught in an eddy and disappeared. People searched for her body all day, but they could not find it. They summoned a Kede from Pojo. He arrived the following morning and brought her body to the surface in half an hour. Her hands and feet were locked, so that no one could unclench them, and her mouth was tightly shut. She was laid in a hut and the people gathered round her and mourned her, for they believed her to be dead. The Kede man told them that she was not dead, and he had her carried to his house, where he gave her medicines, and in three days she was well.

The Bangawa are a riverain section, practising the trade of canoe-men and fishermen in the Bida Emirate. Their Nupe origin is disputed.

There is a Haussa tribe of the same name, who came from Katsina, but it is unlikely that there is any connection between them and the Nupe off-set.

In Lapai Emirate the Bata tribe number some 5,000 to 6,000. They are an agricultural people and collect sylvan produce, *i.e.*, shea-nuts and palm kernels, from which they extract oil. The only industry extensively practised is weaving. Their Sarakuna form a judicial council, presided over by a head-man, which is directly responsible to the Emir.

The Batachi are a riverain section in the Bida Emirate. The name means "talaka," and is descriptive of their social position towards the Nupe.

The Bini section are the aboriginal occupants of Bida. Their other principal towns are Doko, Eyagi, Tua, Pichi and Wuya. The name Bini signifies, "he who opens his mouth fully to speak the truth." They are a pagan race, and practised their rites on the Hill of Tua some three or four miles out of Bida town. The sacrifice of a black ox, etc., was part of the formula, and the dead were buried in pots at the base of the hill. These practices were put an end to by the father of the present Emir of Bida. The Bini are fast dying out. There are two sub-sections,

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922
FF52 Nupe FF52



634 the Isaji, who are now distributed over the Pateji Division of Ilorin Province, Kontagora Province, and the Bida Emirate, having been dispersed at the beginning of the nineteenth century from G'bara (now Jimunli); and the Gwagbaji who fled from Jengi near Rabba, north to Kontagora Province on the Filane aggression. They are now to be found in the Zuguma District, in Yelwa north-west of N'Gaski, and in the Bussa District below Wawa. They are described as a very dark race, good looking and well built.

[304] The tribal marks consist of a scar on one cheek, stretching from the nose to the corner of the mouth. Some people, in addition, wear three small cuts at each corner of the mouth, and three small cuts on the chin. They practise circumcision.

The Nupe of Duchu, a town south of the Kaduna river, on the western angle of the Bako and Niger rivers, are talakawa to the Nupe. They are pagans and hold the "echu" snake [771] (probably a python) as sacred. This snake is said to emerge from the bush whenever it is wanted, which is always on the birth of a child, for a mother may not suckle her infant until the "echu" has touched her breasts.

The Ebe are settled in the Yelwa District of Kontagora, but are now almost extinct. They speak Haussa, as well as [304] a dialect of Nupe. They practise circumcision. Their tribal mark is a scar on each cheek from the nose to the corner of the mouth.

Etsu is the name given to a group of Gboda, Kupari, and Gbangiri from Kukuruku (Kabba Province), and Yoruba, who settled in the Sapke District and built the town of Etsu, becoming naturalised Nupe.

634 "Kuso" is the Nupe word for a kola plantation and
771 "Kusopa" means "the man who guards the kola trees."
775 They live in the Labohzi District, an area celebrated for its
[245] kola trees, and a place where palm-oil flourishes, in the south-west of the province. They are pagans. They believe that each individual lives four times, in different existences of which this is the second. They believe that this life is an improvement on the last, where all people were very big and thickly made. In the next life they believe that people will be very tall, but thin, and in the fourth and last life that they will be tiny people, only one or two feet in height. This fourth phase comes at the end of the world when everybody has died, and it is regarded as a heaven, but it is not permanent, being followed by extinction. It is only the good people who can attain to it, as the wicked become bush-beasts. It is not clear whether they believe that the soul is immediately translated to the succeeding sphere or not, but they appear to think that a period of death comes between each phase.

1 [i.e. Of the Bini subtribe.- Analyst]

4: Temple G-4 (no date) 1922

FF52 Nupe FF52



In this world they[1] sacrifice to a god called Dako-Gwoya, who takes visible form after harvest, when a big feast is held and much beer is drunk. He has the appearance of a man, but is higher than a double-storeyed house. He speaks and tells the people what to do in business and social matters, but though the women may hear him they may not see him.

The Nupe of Zumbufu (on the Niger) are of mixed blood, having intermarried freely with the Yoruba. Zumbufu was founded by a hunter early in the nineteenth century, who came from the Lafiaji District, but they were never tributary to any but the Bini of Bida. They were incorporated in the Share District of Ilorin Province in 1910. They too are pagans and worship a god called Bakoboya, who is recognised as far away as Padda in the Pategi Division, an evil spirit who brings sickness and famine. He appears in visible forms at festivals, in the guise (with the aid of a ten foot pole) of a very tall man. His representative dances round the town, surrounded by the head-men of Zumbufu, and throughout the dance they beat each other violently, but are said to feel no pain.

The inhabitants of Kutegi, Enegi, and Gbachi, are immigrants from Bornu. They still wear the Kanuri tribal marks, but they have adopted the Nupe language.

[1] [i.e. The Kasopa subtribe.--Analyst]

634 771 776 634 776 634 304 197 167